		Application No.	Applicant(s)	
Notice of Allowability		10/016,790	HOUGH ET AL.	
		Examiner	Art Unit	
		Benjamin R. Bruckart	2155	

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address--

All claims being allowable, PROSECUTION ON THE MERITS IS (OR REMAINS) CLOSED in this application. If not included herewith (or previously mailed), a Notice of Allowance (PTOL-85) or other appropriate communication will be mailed in due course. **THIS NOTICE OF ALLOWANCE IS NOT A GRANT OF PATENT RIGHTS.** This application is subject to withdrawal from issue at the initiative of the Office or upon petition by the applicant. See 37 CFR 1.313 and MPEP 1308.

1. ☒ This communication is responsive to *the request for consideration and amendment filed 10/3/07*.

2. ☒ The allowed claim(s) is/are *1-27*.

3. ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).

    a) ☐ All   b) ☐ Some*   c) ☐ None of the:

      1. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.

      2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____ .

      3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this national stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

    * Certified copies not received: _____ .

Applicant has THREE MONTHS FROM THE "MAILING DATE" of this communication to file a reply complying with the requirements noted below. Failure to timely comply will result in ABANDONMENT of this application. **THIS THREE-MONTH PERIOD IS NOT EXTENDABLE.**

4. ☐ A SUBSTITUTE OATH OR DECLARATION must be submitted. Note the attached EXAMINER'S AMENDMENT or NOTICE OF INFORMAL PATENT APPLICATION (PTO-152) which gives reason(s) why the oath or declaration is deficient.

5. ☐ CORRECTED DRAWINGS (as "replacement sheets") must be submitted.

    (a) ☐ including changes required by the Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948) attached

      1) ☐ hereto or 2) ☐ to Paper No./Mail Date _____ .

    (b) ☐ including changes required by the attached Examiner's Amendment / Comment or in the Office action of

      Paper No./Mail Date _____ .

    Identifying indicia such as the application number (see 37 CFR 1.84(c)) should be written on the drawings in the front (not the back) of each sheet. Replacement sheet(s) should be labeled as such in the header according to 37 CFR 1.121(d).

6. ☐ DEPOSIT OF and/or INFORMATION about the deposit of BIOLOGICAL MATERIAL must be submitted. Note the attached Examiner's comment regarding REQUIREMENT FOR THE DEPOSIT OF BIOLOGICAL MATERIAL.

Attachment(s)

1. ☒ Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)

2. ☐ Notice of Draftperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)

3. ☐ Information Disclosure Statements (PTO/SB/08), Paper No./Mail Date _____

4. ☐ Examiner's Comment Regarding Requirement for Deposit of Biological Material

5. ☐ Notice of Informal Patent Application

6. ☒ Interview Summary (PTO-413), Paper No./Mail Date *20071025* .

7. ☒ Examiner's Amendment/Comment

8. ☒ Examiner's Statement of Reasons for Allowance

9. ☐ Other _____ .

SALEH NAJJAR
SUPERVISORY PATENT EXAMINER

EXAMINER'S AMENDMENT

An examiner's amendment to the record appears below. Should the changes and/or additions be unacceptable to applicant, an amendment may be filed as provided by 37 CFR 1.312. To ensure consideration of such an amendment, it MUST be submitted no later than the payment of the issue fee.

Authorization for this examiner's amendment was given in a telephone interview and email with Gregory Lunt, Reg. No. 57,354.

The application has been amended as follows:

In the claims:

Listing of Claims:

1. (Currently Amended) At a computer system configured to manage an online chat session relating to a specified subject being discussed between a plurality of members of a group of chat participants, the group including a plurality of computer users, a computer implemented method for including a plurality of computer users as members of the group of chat participants and a plurality of software resources as members of the group of chat participants within the online chat session conducted through a messaging service, each software resource in the plurality of software resources being includable in the online chat session, comprising the steps of:

(a) receiving a first request to add a first software resource to an online chat session from a first member of the online chat session, each of the plurality of software resources being available to participate in the online chat session, when added by a chat session member;

(b) receiving a second request to add a second software resource to the online chat session from a second member of the online chat session;

(c) including both the first software resource and the second software resource, along with the plurality of computer users, as members in a group of online chat participants, each member in the group of chat participants, including the software resources, capable of sending a plain language message relating to the specified subject being discussed to all the other members in the group of chat participants, including those software resources that have been added by online chat session members including at least the first and second software resources;

(d) one of the plurality of computer users transmitting the plain language message to a plurality of members of the group of online chat participants, including the plurality of software resources that have been added by online chat session members;

(e) the first software resource receiving from a member of the group of chat participants a submission of a plain language message related to the specified subject being discussed;

(f) the first software resource parsing each received plain language message to generate a query for data related to the specified subject being discussed, the parsing performed ~~solely~~ in response to receiving the plain language messages;

(g)   the first software resource submitting the generated query to at least one database to obtain data specific to the subject being discussed;

(h)   the first software resource receiving a response to the query from at least one of the at least one databases;

(i)   the first software resource determining a plain language response to the message based on the received database response, the plain language response being related to the subject being discussed; and

(j)   the first software resource transmitting the plain language response back to all of the members of the group of chat participants, including the member that submitted the plain language message and including at least one other member that did not submit the plain language message, thus enabling each member of the group of chat participants to equally interact with the software resource as another participant in the online chat session, by responding to the plain language message relating to the specified subject being discussed.

2. (Original) The method of Claim 1, further comprising the step of enabling the user to selectively direct the message to the software resource.

3. (Previously Presented) The method of Claim 1, wherein one or more of the plurality of computer users answers the plain language message sent to the software resource.

4. (Original) The method of Claim 1, wherein, if the software resource is unable to determine a plain language response to the plain language message, the response is one of a nil response and an indication that a response cannot be provided.

5. (Original) The method of Claim 1, further comprising the step of providing a graphic indication that the software resource is online and available to participate in the online chat session as a participant.

6. (Original) The method of Claim 1, wherein the plain language message comprises a query, and the plain language response comprises data responsive to the query.

7. (Previously Presented) The method of Claim 3, wherein the user that submitted the message receives multiple responses to the message including responses from the software resource and one or more of the plurality of computer users.

8. (Original) The method of Claim 1, wherein the step of registering comprises the step of registering with a messaging service server through which the messaging service is implemented for all participants in the online chat session, including the software resource.

9. (Original) The method of Claim 1, wherein the step of determining the plain language response includes the step of employing the software resource to search through data accessible by the software resource to find data provided in the plain language response.

10. (Previously Presented) A machine readable medium having processor-executable machine instructions for performing steps (b) - (d) as recited in Claim 1.

11. (Previously Presented) A machine readable medium having processor-executable machine instructions for performing steps (a) and (e) - (g) as recited in Claim 1.

12. (Currently Amended) A method for accessing information available through a software resource during a messaging service session relating to a specified subject being discussed, comprising the steps of:

(a)   indicating participants in a group of online chat participants in the messaging service session, the group including as members in the group a plurality of users and at least a first software resource and a second software resource from among a plurality of software resources, the first software resource being added in response to a request from a first user to add the first user to the group, the second software resource being added in response to a request from a second user to add the second user to the group;

(b)   enabling any of the plurality of users to enter a plain language message in the messaging service session relating to a specified subject being discussed;

(c)   one of the plurality of computer users transmitting the plain language message to a plurality of members of the group of online chat participants, including at least one of the software resources;

(d)   the first software resource parsing each plain language message to generate a query for data related to the specified subject being discussed, the parsing performed ~~solely~~ in response to receiving the plain language messages;

(e)   the first software resource submitting the generated query to at least one database to obtain data specific to the subject being discussed;

(f)   the first software resource receiving a response to the query from at least one of the at least one databases;

(g)   the first software resource automatically determining information responsive to the plain language message based on the received database response, the plain language response being related to the subject being discussed; and

(h)   the first software resource transmitting the information responsive to the plain language message back to all of the members of the group of chat participants, including the member that submitted the plain language message and including at least one other member that did not submit the plain language message, thus enabling each member of the group of chat participants to equally access information through the software resource, wherein the software resource acts as a participant in the messaging service session by responding to the plain

language query entered by any of the plurality of users, the plain language message relating to the specified subject being discussed.

13. (Original) The method of Claim 12, wherein the software resource and all other participants in the messaging service session are coupled in communication over a network.

14. (Original) The method of Claim 12, further comprising the step of enabling the user to selectively add the software resource to the messaging service session from a list of prospective participants.

15. (Previously Presented) The method of Claim 12, further comprising the step of enabling the user to selectively direct the plain language message to the software resource.

16. (Previously Presented) The method of Claim 12, wherein the software resource comprises a data manager program that accesses a store of data to find the information responsive to the plain language message transmitted from the user.

17. (Previously Presented) The method of Claim 12, further comprising the step of transmitting an indication from the software resource to the user that information responsive to the plain language message could not be provided.

18. (Original) The method of Claim 12, further comprising the step of providing an indication to a user when the software resource is unavailable to participate in a messaging service session.

19. (Original) The method of Claim 12, wherein the information provided by the software resource includes a network address at which data responsive to the query are located.

20. (Original) The method of Claim 12, wherein a plurality of software resources are included in a list of prospective participants in the messaging service session.

21. (Currently Amended) A system for enabling a software resource to respond as a conventional participant in a messaging service session implemented over a network, comprising:

(a)   a messaging service server coupled to the network and programmed for implementing registration of prospective instant message participants available to be added to a messaging service session as participants;

(b)   a plurality of user computing devices coupled to the network, each including a processor programmed to:

(i)   execute a messaging service session in which members of a group of online chat participants including a plurality of users and a plurality of software resources are discussing a specified subject;

(ii)   add at least a first software resource and a second software resource as a members of the group of online chat participants in the messaging service session to interact with other online chat participants regarding the specified subject, the first software resource being added in response to a request from a first user to add the first user to the group, the second software resource being added in response to a request from a second user to add the second user to the group; and

(iii)   enable any of the plurality of users to enter a plain language message for information to be obtained from the software resource within the messaging service session; and

(c)   a software resource computing device coupled to the network and programmed to:

(i)   execute the software resource;

(ii)   register the software resource with the messaging service server when the software resource is available to participate in a messaging service session as a participant;

(iii)   parse a each plain language message received from one of the plurality of users during the messaging service session to generate a query for data related to the specified subject being discussed, the parsing performed solely in response to receiving the plain language messages;

(iv)   submit the generated query to at least one database to obtain data specific to the subject being discussed;

        (v)   receive a response to the query from at least one of the at least one databases;

        (vi)   determine a plain language response to the message based on the received database response, the plain language response being related to the subject being discussed

        (vii)   transmit said information to all of the members of the group of chat participants, including the user computing device that submitted the plain language message and including at least one other member that did not submit the plain language message over the network, thus enabling each member of the group of chat participants to equally interact with the software resource as another participant in the online chat session, by enabling the software resource to respond to the plain language message relating to the specified subject being discussed.

22. (Previously Presented) The system of Claim 21, wherein the software resource computing device includes a data store from which the information is derived to respond to the plain language message received during the messaging service session.

23. (Previously Presented) The system of Claim 21, wherein the user computing device includes a user interface that enables a user to enter the plain language message into the messaging service session.

24. (Original) The system of Claim 21, wherein the user computing device includes a display on which the messaging service session is viewed, an image viewable during said messaging service session including an indication of whether the software resource is available to participate in the messaging service session.

25. (Original) The system of Claim 21, wherein the user computer device is programmed to enable a user to selectively add the software resource as a participant in the messaging service session.

26. (Currently Amended) Apparatus that includes a software resource as a member of a group of chat participants within an online chat session relating to a specified subject being discussed conducted through a messaging service, comprising:

(a)   a network interface that connects to a network over which the messaging service session is communicated;

(b)   a display;

(c)   a user input device;

(d)   a memory in which a plurality of machine instructions are stored; and

(e)   a processor coupled to the network interface, the display, the user input device, and the memory, said processor executing the machine instructions, causing the processor to carry out a plurality of functions, including:

(i)   receiving a first request to add a first software resource to an online chat session from a first member of the online chat session, each of the plurality of software resources being available to participate in the online chat session, when added by a chat session member;

(ii)   receiving a second request to add a second software resource to the online chat session from a second member of the online chat session;

(iii)   including both the first software resource and the second software resource, along with the plurality of computer users, as members in a group of online chat participants, each member in the group of chat participants, including the software resources, capable of sending a plain language message relating to the specified subject being discussed to all the other members in the group of chat participants, including those software resources that have been added by online chat session members including at least the first and second software resources;

(iv)   one of the plurality of computer users transmitting the plain language message to a plurality of members of the group of online chat participants, including the plurality of software resources that have been added by online chat session members;

(v)   the first software resource receiving from a member of the group of chat participants a submission of a plain language message related to the specified subject being discussed;

(vi)   the first software resource parsing each received plain language message to generate a query for data related to the specified subject being discussed, the parsing performed ~~solely~~ in response to receiving the plain language messages;

(vii)   the first software resource submitting the generated query to at least one database to obtain data specific to the subject being discussed;

(viii)   the first software resource receiving a response to the query from at least one of the at least one databases;

(ix)   the first software resource determining a plain language response to the message based on the received database response, the plain language response being related to the subject being discussed; and

(x)   the first software resource transmitting the plain language response back to all of the members of the group of chat participants, including the member that submitted the plain language message and including at least one other member that did not submit the plain language message, thus enabling each member of the group of chat participants to equally interact with the software resource as another participant in the online chat session, by responding to the plain language message relating to the specified subject being discussed.

27. (Currently Amended) Apparatus that enables at least one software resource of a plurality of software resources to interact as a participant during a messaging service session relating to a specified subject being discussed, comprising:

(a)   a network interface that connects to a network over which the messaging service session is communicated;

(b)   a memory in which a plurality of machine instructions are stored; and

(c)   a processor coupled to the network interface, and the memory, said processor executing the machine instructions, causing the processor to carry out a plurality of functions, including:

(i)   registering at least a first software resource and a second software resource of the plurality of software resources with a messaging service as being available to participate in a messaging service session as a member of a group of online chat participants, the group including as members of the group a plurality of users, the first software resource and the second software resource the first software resource being added in response to a request from a first user to add the first user to the group, the second software resource being added in response to a request from a second user to add the second user to the group;

(ii)   parsing a plain language message relating to a specified subject being discussed received from any of the plurality of users during a messaging service session in which the software resource has been added as a participant by one or more of the plurality of users, the software resource being enabled to receive and parse the plain language message, the parsing performed ~~solely~~ in response to receiving the plain language messages;

(iii)   submitting the generated query to at least one database to obtain data specific to the subject being discussed;

(iv)   receiving a response to the query from at least one of the at least one databases;

(v)   automatically determining information responsive to the plain language message based on the received database response, the plain language response being related to the subject being discussed;

(vi)   transmitting the information responsive to the plain language message over the network to all of the members of the group of chat participants, including the member

that submitted the plain language message and including at least one other member that did not submit the plain language message, thus enabling each member of the group of chat participants to equally access information through the software resource.

REASONS FOR ALLOWANCE

The following is an examiner's statement of reasons for allowance:

Independent claims 1, 12, 21, 26 and 27 among other things teach the limitations "a

plurality of computer users and a plurality of software resources in an online chat discussing a

related topic, the computer users inviting software resources into the chat session and the

software resources parsing plain language messages relating to the specified subject being

discussed, the software resource parsing each received plain language message to generate a

query for data related to the specified subject, the query sent to at least one database and the

software resource transmitting the plain language response back to all of the members of the

group of participants" in a computer network environment with chat sessions.

The prior art does not teach the cited limitation.

Any comments considered necessary by applicant must be submitted no later than the

payment of the issue fee and, to avoid processing delays, should preferably accompany the issue

fee. Such submissions should be clearly labeled "Comments on Statement of Reasons for

Allowance."

CORRESPONDANCE INFORMATION

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the

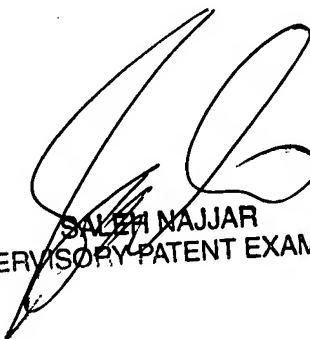examiner should be directed to Benjamin R Bruckart whose telephone number 571-272-3982.

      If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's

supervisor, Saleh Najjar can be reached on (571) 272-4006. The fax phone numbers for the

organization where this application or proceeding is assigned are (571) 273-8300 for regular

communications and after final communications.

      Any inquiry of a general nature or relating to the status of this application or proceeding

should be directed to the examiner whose telephone number is 571-272-3982.

Benjamin R Bruckart
Examiner
Art Unit 2155

brb
10-26-07

SALEH NAJJAR
SUPERVISORY PATENT EXAMINER